

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 31101 251540Z
ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 31101

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, US, FR
SUBJECT: ANNUAL BILATERAL US-FRENCH DISCUSSIONS ON
EAST ASIA

1. DURING MEETING WITH ELYSEE SECRETARY GENERAL JEAN FRANCOIS-PONCET, ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE MENTIONED HIS DISSATISFACTION WITH BILATERAL TALKS PREVIOUS DAY BETWEEN DIRECTOR OF EAST ASIAN POLITICAL AFFAIRS AND HIMSELF. HE CHARACTERIZED THEM AS A ONE-WAY STREET SINCE QUAI D'ORSAY REPRESENTATIVE HAD ALMOST NOTHING TO SHARE ON FRENCH POLICY, PLANS OR INDEED EVALUATION OF EAST ASIAN SITUATION. SINGLE EXCEPTION, HE NOTED, WAS VIETNAM WHERE QUAI WAS EXTREMELY HELPFUL AND GENEROUS IN SHARING ITS KNOWLEDGE. HOLBROOKE SAID THIS QUAI RELUCTANCE OR DIFFIDENCE TENDED TO RAISE QUESTION OF UTILITY OF BILATERAL EXCHANGES WHERE ONLY ONE SIDE - U.S. - WAS FORTHCOMING.

2. FRANCOIS-PONCET EMPHASIZED THAT HE APPRECIATED HOLBROOKE'S RAISING THIS ISSUE WITH HIM. HE UNDERTOOK TO EXPLORE IT FURTHER WITH FOREIGN MINISTER WITH VIEW TO TAKING REMEDIAL ACTION BEFORE NEXT EDITION OF TALKS NEXT YEAR. HE EXPLAINED THAT FRENCH DIPLOMATS WERE UNFORTUNATELY PRONE TO GIVE TOO LITTLE AND TO BE
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EXCESSIVELY CLOSE-MOUTHED, WHICH HE ADMITTED WAS NO WAY TO ELICIT USEFUL EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION. THE OTHER FACTOR HE SAID WAS THE UNFORTUNATE TENDENCY IN THE QUAI D'ORSAY TO ESCALATE POLICY MATTERS TO HIGHEST LEVEL AND TO KEEP LOWER AND MIDDLE LEVELS IN THE DARK WITH CONSEQUENT DAMAGE TO THE MORALE AND TO THEIR ABILITY TO CARRY ON THEIR WORK. HE THANKED

HOLBROOKE AGAIN FOR SHARING THIS IMPRESSION WITH HIM
AND PROMISED TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION IN THE FUTURE.
HE SAID HE WOULD TAKE IT UP PRIVATELY WITH
DE GUIRINGAUD.
HARTMAN

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Message Attributes

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